

Russell

Term question

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THE

# TERM QUESTION:

OR

AN ENQUIRY AS TO THE TERM IN THE CHINESE  
LANGUAGE WHICH MOST NEARLY REPRESENTS  
ELOHIM AND THEOS AS THEY ARE  
USED IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

BY

WILLIAM ARMSTRONG RUSSELL, D.D.

*Missionary Bishop of the Church of England in North China.*



SHANGHAI:  
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## INTRODUCTION.

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IN venturing to discuss what is commonly called the "*Term*" question, and to submit my views upon it to the consideration of my brethren the Protestant missionaries in China, and to the Directors of the Bible Societies in Great Britain and the United States of America, I have been chiefly influenced by the two following considerations:—

### I. ITS EXTREME IMPORTANCE.

This is apparent from the fact that the term which represents *Elohim* and *Theos* in any language is that term upon which must be based, and around which must be grouped all correct ideas, all systematic teaching, and all Scriptural truth touching the nature and attributes of Him, "in whom we live, and move, and have our being," "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." And hence the unspeakable importance of having the right term, and of not making a mistake in a matter which might involve in error, on the gravest of all subjects, the present and future generations of our fellow-creatures in this vast empire.

The extreme importance of this question will also appear from the equally undeniable fact that no other question connected with our work has been, and still

is, the cause of so much division and estrangement from each other amongst the members of the missionary body in China; and unless it is settled in some satisfactory way, there is every reason to apprehend that this most unhappy condition of things will be perpetuated, and probably even aggravated as time goes on. Moreover, as far as one can see, this question if left unsettled, will make it impossible to have either a common version of the Holy Scriptures, or a common Christian literature of any kind; and thus preclude all hearty practical co-operation on the part of those who differ. And, what is a still more serious consideration, it is to be feared that this lamentable state of affairs will sooner or later be imported into the native churches and amongst our native brethern, and produce there consequences yet more disastrous.

## II. PRESENT POSITION OF THE QUESTION.

For some years past the Term Question has been allowed to remain comparatively at rest, with apparently a tacit understanding to that effect on the part of the different contending parties. This probably arose either from a conviction that all that could be said upon it had been said already, and in the best and ablest manner, by those who had previously discussed it; or from an impression that the parties to settle it were, not foreigners, but the natives themselves, (when, by the acquisition of Hebrew and Greek, they became qualified to exercise upon it a clear and independent judgment); or possibly from a vague hope that something in the course of events might turn up which would lead to its solution. Feelings akin to these have,



I confess, operated upon my own mind, and led me hitherto to refrain from making any public statement of my views upon this question, though its importance and difficulty have been present to my mind for a period of nearly thirty years. Matters however are now altered. The truce is broken, the various parties are again in the field, and the discussion is being renewed on all sides. Under these circumstances I feel that I ought not any longer to stand aloof, but, notwithstanding my inability to treat such a difficult problem at all adequately, to endeavor to throw such light as I can upon it, earnestly praying that this attempt may, under God, prove of some use towards its elucidation and final settlement.

*your  
inability  
is the  
clearest  
thing in  
this camp*

## CHAPTER I.

### STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION.

In the discussion of every question, and especially, I venture to think, in the discussion of the one now before us, it is of the utmost importance to have, at the outset, a clear view and a distinct apprehension of the meaning and import of the question itself. Ambiguity and misconception here, can only lead to confusion of thought, endless logomachy, and in the end irrelevant conclusions. To prevent this as far as I may, let me now endeavor to state with all the precision in my power what this Term question is. And this, I apprehend, will be best done by premising what it is *not*.

It is ~~(not)~~ then, let it be distinctly understood, a question <sup>a</sup> as to what term or terms in the Chinese language may with propriety be used to designate the Divine Being. In Chinese, as in all other languages, there are several terms which may be most appropriately employed for this purpose; as for instance Heavenly Lord, Supreme Ruler, Heavenly Father, Governor of Heaven and Earth. But this is not the question now before us.

Nor, is it a question as to which of all the various terms which may be employed, conveys to the Chinese mind the most exalted idea of the Divine Being, and which consequently it would be desirable to use in our ordinary speaking or writing. Such a question might be a very interesting and profitable one in itself, but this again is quite distinct from our present enquiry.

*is in  
different  
question  
by  
and this  
also*

What then is the question? It is simply this, (What is that term in the Chinese language which most nearly represents the words *Elohim* and *Theos* as used in the Holy Scriptures? or in other words, What is that term which ought to be employed as *their* representative in the translation of God's Word into Chinese? or to put it in perhaps a still plainer and simpler form, What is the *word* GOD in Chinese?)

GOD

## MODE OF CONDUCTING THE ENQUIRY.

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In the prosecution of this enquiry, the natural and obvious course to take, is, first to ascertain the *nature* of (these terms *Elohim* and *Theos*, and this can only be done by an examination of their *usus loquendi* in the Sacred Writings.) In these we have the Divine Being designated in *three* different ways; (1) by the *name* Jehovah; (2) by various *titles* such as Lord, Almighty, the Most High; (3) by the *words* *Elohim* and *Theos*. In many places, as far as one can see, these different terms might be used interchangeably, without violating any grammatical or doctrinal principle. And yet in certain positions each has its own special use, in which it could not be so interchanged, and in which the employment of any other term would be, not merely inappropriate, but altogether inadmissible. Now it is clearly this specific use which will enable us to fix the exact nature of these terms, the precise ground they cover, and the definite uses to which they are applied by the sacred writers. Let us examine then what is their specific *usus loquendi* in the Holy Scriptures.

## USUS LOQUENDI OF ELOHIM AND THEOS.

Before entering upon this examination let me



premise that *Elohim* and *Theos* being used in the Bible as synonymous terms, for the sake of brevity and in order to avoid repetition, I shall regard all proofs adduced for the use of the one as equally applicable to the other.

I. First, we find *Elohim* and *Theos* in the Holy Scriptures used for god in an *absolute* sense. In support of this I would adduce the following passages. Gen. i. 1, "In the beginning *Elohim* created the heaven and the earth." Ps. xc. 2, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art *Elohim*." In these passages the Divine Being is presented to us as the Great First Cause, the original source of all things, who existed before all other existences; and who in that pre-existent state must have been perfectly and absolutely independent, having no relation to anything beyond or beside Himself, the eternal I AM.

Now in order to designate the Deity as He then was, none but an absolute term could with propriety be employed; with, perhaps, the exception of His own distinctive name, Jehovah. A relative term would here be altogether out of place. *Heavenly Lord* would not do, as then there was no heaven to be the Lord of; *Supreme Ruler* would not do, as then there were none to rule over; *the true god* would not do, as then there were no *false gods* from which He was to be distinguished. And hence we conclude that the term *Elohim*, which the Sacred Writers, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, have employed in these passages to designate the Divine Being, must be an absolute term. B

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relative  
term

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manhood most likely had no such absolute  
various languages to begin with

2. Secondly, we find *Elohim* and *Theos* in the Holy Scriptures used for God in a *generic* sense. The following passages, with many others of a similar kind which might be adduced, will confirm this: Judg. x. 6, "And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of Jehovah, and served Baalim and Ashtaroth, and the *Elohim* of Syria, and the *Elohim* of Zidon, and the *Elohim* of Moab, and the *Elohim* of the children of Ammon, and the *Elohim* of the Philistines, and forsook Jehovah, and served not Him." Ps. xcvi. 4, 5, "For Jehovah is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all *Elohim*. For all the *Elohim* of the nations are idols: but Jehovah made the heavens." Acts xix. 26, "This Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no *theoi*, which are made with hands." These and such-like passages clearly shew that *Elohim* and *Theos* are also used in a *generic* sense, including all homogeneous objects, embracing "all that is called God, or that is worshipped." They comprehend not only the *dii majores* and the *dii minores* of the Greeks and Romans, the *devas* and *shin* of the Hindoos and Chinese, and all other gods and goddesses of every description in every nation under heaven, but even the very *idols* themselves, from the little teraphim which Rachel hid in the camel's furniture, to the great "image of gold, whose height was three-score cubits and the breadth thereof six cubits;" which Nebuchadnezzar the king "set up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon."

Here again none but a *generic* term could with propriety be used to represent *Elohim* and *Theos*, no *relative*

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or all the developpers of things  
or all the spirits

term could be employed without doing violence to the acknowledged laws of language, and making the places so rendered absurd and meaningless. To say, for instance, all the "Heavenly Lords," or all the "Supreme Rulers," or all the "true gods" of the nations are idols, would be a manifest misuse of terms. And hence we conclude that the term *Elohim* which the inspired writers have employed in these passages must also be a *generic* term.

The foregoing examination of the *usus loquendi* of the Holy Scriptures as regards *Elohim* and *Theos*, prove then beyond all question that these terms, as there employed, are both *absolute* and *generic*.

DEFINITION OF AN ABSOLUTE-GENERIC TERM.

And here perhaps will be the most suitable place to define what an *Absolute-generic* term is. Archbishop Whately, in his book on the "Elements of Logic,"<sup>1</sup> says, that an *Absolute* term is one which denotes "an object considered *as a whole*, and without reference to anything of which it is a part, or to any other part distinguished from it." While a *Relative* term is one which denotes "an object considered *as a part* of a whole, viewed in referenee to the whole, or to another part of a more complex object of thought." He adduces *Man* as an instance of an *Absolute* term; and such words as *father*, *son*, *commander*, *ruler*, as instances of *Relative* terms. But *Man* is not only an *Absolute* term, it is also a *Generic* one, including the whole human race; and *father*, *son*, *commander*, *ruler*, &c., are not only *Relative* terms, they are also *Common* ones, embracing

used absolutely  
and generically  
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is a part  
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the  
kan of something

<sup>1</sup> Book II. chap v. 31.

天神, 地神, 人神

all who stand in these relationships. And hence we have *Absolute-generic* and *Relative-common* terms; distinctions very important to be borne in mind in dealing with this Term controversy. As regards *Elohim* and *Theos* properly speaking they are simply *Absolute* terms, as there is but one god; but in view of polytheism and their *usus loquendi* in the Bible, they are also *Absolute-generic* terms.

*Like strength there is properly but one*

FURTHER PROOFS. *Usus is improper.*

In order to establish still more conclusively the *Absolute-generic* nature of *Elohim* and *Theos*, as used in the Holy Scriptures, and with the view of pointing out still more distinctly the impossibility of substituting for them a *Relative* or *Relative-common* term, without a violation of the laws of language and of the meaning of God's Word, I will now bring forward *two* additional uses of their specific employment in the Bible; *one*, in which *the true God* is contrasted, whether expressly or by implication with *false gods*—imaginary beings of the *same nature*; the *other*, in which God, whether *true* or *false*, is contrasted with *man*—beings of a *different nature*.

*this no view*

1. As regards the *first*; *i. e.* the contrast, whether expressed or implied, between the *true God* and *false gods*, the instances of this are very numerous in the Bible. Let the following suffice: Ex. xx. 2, 3, "I am Jehovah thy *Elohim*,.....thou shalt have no other *Elohim* before me." Deut. x. 17, "For Jehovah your *Elohim* is an *Elohim* of *Elohim*." I. Cor. viii. 5, 6, "For though there be that are called *theoi* whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be *theoi* many and lords

*thy absolute Lord of lords*

*The word "Lord" would do quite well*

many,) but to us there is but one *Theos*. Gal iv. 8, "Howbeit then, when ye knew not *Theos*, ye did service unto them which by nature are no *theoi*." Here the contrast between the *true* and the *false* is expressed. Again in Ex. iii. 6, "I am the *Elohim* of thy Father, the *Elohim* of Abraham, the *Elohim* of Isaac, the *Elohim* of Jacob." Ex. xv. 2, "He is my *Elohim*, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my Father's *Elohim*, and I will exalt Him." Ruth, i. 16, "Thy people shall be my people, and thy *Elohim* my *Elohim*." I. Thess. i. 9, "How ye turned to *Theos* from idols, to serve the living and true *Theos*." Here the contrast is implied. But whether expressed or implied, in all the instances quoted above the *true God* is evidently contrasted with *false gods*.

In such passages as these it is still more evident that *Elohim* and *Theos* are used in an *Absolute-generic* sense and that none but an *Absolute-generic* term could properly represent them. To substitute for them a *Relative* or *Relative-common* term would involve not only a most serious grammatical error, but a misrepresentation of the divine meaning. To say, for instance, "I am thy (*Supreme Ruler*) thou shalt have no other (*Supreme Ruler*) before me," would make the commandment of none effect. It would not in the least interdict polytheism. In this form every polytheist might accept it, as all recognize only *one* amongst their many gods as Supreme Ruler and Heavenly Lord; while, at the same time, they worship a host of inferior deities. Again, to substitute for *Elohim* and *Theos* in the following passages a *Relative*

"The Lord our God is one Lord"

Lord  
Lords

Christ  
or

Paul

said

"Lord"



Why insist on an etymological translation  
of  $\text{E}^{\text{h}}$ ? which is also an incorrect one.

Elohim in the same way — translated by  
"overlapped being" — and you may make it  
unintelligible.

or *Relative-common* term—to say, "Howbeit, then,  
when ye knew not the (Supreme Ruler) ye did service  
unto them, which by nature are no (Supreme Rulers)"  
the inadmissibility of such a rendering is still more  
apparent, as here the *nature* of God is not only implied  
but expressly indicated, which could not be done by  
means of a *Relative* term.

Lord  
lords

In cases such as these, where there is an evident  
inappropriateness in the employment of a *Relative* or  
*Relative-common* term to represent *Elohim* and *Theos*  
persistently throughout, an attempt is sometimes  
made to meet the difficulty by the use of *two* terms,—  
one a *Relative term*, to represent the *true God*; the  
other a *Generic term*, to represent *false gods*. For  
instance, the first commandment is sometimes translat-  
ed in this manner, "I am Jehovah, thy *Heavenly*  
*Lord*, thou shalt have no other *gods* before me." And  
Gal. iv. 8, is sometimes rendered as follows, "Howbeit,  
then, when ye knew not the *Heavenly Lord*, ye did  
service unto them which by nature are no *gods*."  
Such a mode of meeting the difficulty is far from  
satisfactory; as it destroys altogether the *contrast*  
between the *true God* and *false gods*, in which the  
principal significance of such passages lies.

2. And as regards the *second*, i.e. the contrast  
between God, whether true or false, and *men*, the  
instances are also not a few. Is. xxxi, 3, "The  
Egyptians are *men* and not *Elohim*. Hos. xi. 9, "I  
am *Elohim*, and not *man*. Dan. vi. 7, "Whosoever  
shall ask a petition of any *Elohim* or *man*." Acts xii.  
22 "It is the voice of a *Theos* not of a *man*."

ords and men" is a very heathenish expression  
implying the reality of the "gods" as of the "men". It is not

But we can say God and man in  
Chinese: — 上帝與人益愛之。

He . He . without <sup>12</sup> any awkwardness  
or fault in the sense whatever.

The fact of *Elohim* and *Theos* being used in contrast with *man* in such passages as these, ought of itself to be sufficient to determine the nature of these terms; for it will, I suppose, be conceded that *man* is an *Absolute-generic* term, and that the term or terms which can properly be put in contrast with it must be of a similar kind. All will acknowledge that it would be quite correct, so far as language is concerned, to put in contrast with the word *man* such *Absolute-generic* terms as *beast*, *bird*, *fish*,—to say, for instance, of any supposed being, “he is a *man* not a *beast*”; or, “he is both *man* and *beast*,”—but altogether inaccurate to put in contrast with it such *Relative* or *Relative-common* terms as *father*, *son*, *ruler*,—to say “he is a *father* not a *man*,” or, “he is both *father* and *man*.” Now, to say in Chinese, or any other language, “the Egyptians are *men* and not *supreme rulers*,” or to say, “It is the voice of a *Heavenly Lord* and not of a *man*,” would be equally incongruous.

The importance of being accurate in the use of terms to represent *Elohim* and *Theos* in such passages as the above, if the meaning of God's Word is not to be obscured or destroyed, will be obvious to every reflecting mind. But the importance of the strict use of terms becomes a theological necessity when we have to represent the two-fold nature of our Blessed Lord—His Godhead and His Manhood—when, for instance, we have to say “He is the Son of God, and the Son of man, both God and man.” Inaccuracy here would be a very serious matter indeed; and I for one, am unable to see how it can be avoided, except by the employment of an



If 上帝 does not indicate the  
divine nature of <sup>13</sup> God no Chinese  
word will.

*Absolute-generic* term for *God* as well as for *man*. No *Relative* term, it seems to me, could possibly indicate either the *divinity* or the *humanity* of our Blessed Lord. To express it thus: "He was the Son of the *Supreme Ruler*, and the Son of *man*"; both the *Supreme Ruler* and *man*"; or "He was the Son of the *Heavenly Lord*, and the Son of *man*"; both the *Heavenly Lord* and *man*;" such expressions would utterly fail to indicate His Divine nature.

#### THE CONCLUSION.

The conclusion then to which the foregoing examination of the *usus loquendi* of *Elohim* and *Theos*, in the Holy Scriptures has brought us is, that these terms, as there employed, are *Absolute-generic* terms, such as, *man*, *beast*, *bird*, *fish* &c., and that they cannot be translated into Chinese, or any other language, except by terms of an analagous nature, without invalidating the meaning of the original, and "making the Word of God of none effect."

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## CHAPTER II.

### CONTINUATION OF THE ENQUIRY.

Having ascertained the nature of the terms *Elohim* and *Theos*, as used in the Bible—having found that they are *Absolute-generic* terms; in order to obtain a correct reply to the question “what term in the Chinese language most nearly represents them,” our next step is to endeavour to find in that language a term, which has a similar meaning and which can be used in a similar way.

And here, in view of all the attention and examination which have been given to this subject in the past, by Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries, and by other Chinese students, it may, I presume, be taken for granted, that in order to represent *Elohim* and *Theos* in the Chinese language we are virtually restricted to the choice of *one* of the following terms, namely, *Shang-ti* (上帝) *Tien-choo* (天主) and *Shin* (神). Let us then examine as fairly and impartially as we can, in the order in which I have placed them, the respective claims of these terms.

#### SHANG-TI (上帝).

*Shang-ti* is a compound term, which consists of two Chinese characters. It is usually represented in English by the expression *Supreme Ruler*; and that it means this, or something similar to this, I suppose there can be no doubt, supported as this translation is by the unanymous testimony of all lexicographers both foreign and native, and by the *usus loquendi* of the

Why  
omit  
what  
Mr. Chamber says on Ruler?

Chinese language. In Chinese literature of every kind, Confucian, Buddhist, and Taouist, this term is very frequently employed; and like many other Chinese terms, in a variety of senses. When employed however in its proper sense, it always indicates (the chief or presiding ruler of the place, things, or parties, over whom the being so styled is supposed to exercise his sway.) The Taouist sect have several *Shang-ti*, each of whom is considered supreme in the particular department assigned to him, and according to some authorities the same may also be said of the *Shang-ti* of the Confucian system. Still the prevailing impression amongst the literati generally is that the *Shang-ti* of the Confucian classics represents but one being, the Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth, the Sovereign "Lord of gods and men."<sup>1</sup>

*is its proper sense*

*i.e. God*

Looking at the term *Shang-ti* as it appears in Chinese literature, from different points of view, parties have arrived at different conclusions as to the character of the being there spoken of, and hence as to the suitability or otherwise of this term to designate Jehovah the God of the Bible. Some, for instance, having regard to its use in the early historical records of China, and to the probability that when these records were penned there existed amongst the Chinese some traditional knowledge, however vague, of the true God, have concluded that the term *Shang-ti* by which He was then called, is the best which can be employed to represent *Elohim* and *Theos*. But it must be borne

<sup>1</sup> 上帝為民神之主。見禮記月令季夏月疏。  
Shangti is Lord of Gods and men.

*is of no consequence whatever whether*

*Relative? Why give out one translation? Supreme Ruler?*



in mind that in the earliest of these records *Shang-ti* is presented to us as only *one*, though the chief, of the many *shin* who were at that time worshipped; and therefore, even admitting the trustworthiness of these records, that *Shin* and not *Shang-ti* may be the generic word for ~~God~~. Others finding in these books various attributes assigned to *Shang-ti* which properly belong to Jehovah alone, have on this ground concluded that he must be the true God. But this is also a *non sequitur*, for the assignment of attributes however high to a particular being, whether real or imaginary, is not sufficient of itself to prove that being to be the true God, or the term employed to designate him to be the best to represent *Elohim* and *Theos*. The Greeks assigned to *Zeus* the highest attributes which their fertile imagination could conceive (probably much higher than any ever given to *Shang-ti*) but this did not prove *Zeus* to be the true God or the term *Zeus* to be a better word than *Theos* to denote the various senses in which *Theos* is employed in the New Testament. Others again keeping in view the fact that whatever ideas may have been entertained by the Chinese in early times respecting the being they called *Shang-ti*, and whatever high-sounding titles they may have assigned to him, this term in its modern usage is indissolubly united with materialism and idolatry, have hence inferred that it is impossible now to employ it in any sense as a designation of the true God.

Now as regards this term *Shang-ti*, every one acquainted with the matter must admit that it is *per se* a most suitable term by which to designate the Divine

*To what other "real" being but the  
 God of the Bible could the  
 attributes of immensity*

*Spirit*

2

Being, meaning as it does *Supreme Ruler*; and that it is also a term which is very acceptable to the literati of China from its use in their ancient Classical Books. And hence we may conclude that all who have come to propagate monotheism in China, on mere grounds of policy would have been glad to employ it had they not seen strong reasons against its use. That these reasons exist is shown by the fact that nearly all such, including Nestorians, Mahommedans, Roman Catholics, members of the Greek Church, and a large body of Protestant missionaries have with one accord eschewed it. This to say the least is very significant. The ground which they took for this general rejection of an otherwise most suitable and most appropriate term to designate the Divine Being, was its alleged connection with materialism and idolatry. They regarded *Shang-ti* simply as the Chinese Baal, Osiris or Zeus.

Whether they had sufficient reason for coming to this conclusion it is not easy to determine. It is indeed quite clear that the being designated *Shang-ti* in Confucian literature, occupies a place in the Chinese pantheon similar to that assigned to Zeus in the Greek pantheon. But whether he has been degraded to the level of the Olympian Zeus, or admitting that he has, whether the term *Shang-ti* has become his personal name as Baal, Osiris, Zeus, have become their names, so that the term cannot now be dissociated from the being it designates; these are points which appear to me still open to question. If it be so that the being, real or imaginary, whom the Chinese call *Shang-ti* has been thus lowered, and if this term has become his personal

Why not?

glad to hear it

what "real" being?



name, so that it cannot now be dissociated from him ; then I presume that we should all agree that it would be improper to use it for Jehovah. But if these things be not so, there seems to be no reason why *Shang-ti* should not be employed, as one of the designations of the Divine Being.

Still while the term *Shang-ti* may perhaps be thus employed without any violation of principle, there are other reasons against its general use amongst the Chinese which are worthy of some consideration. There is for instance the danger of its being identified with the Taouist idol *Yuh-hwang-ta-ti* (玉皇大帝). That this is a real danger every missionary in China who knows the language and the people, and who has used this term amongst them, will freely admit. On one occasion a friend of mine was preaching not far from my house to a company of Chinese, amongst whom was a Taouist priest. At that time he always employed *Shang-ti* both in speaking and writing. When he concluded his address the priest came forward and said, "Sir, I am glad to find that we are co-religionists." "Indeed" exclaimed my friend. "Why, yes," said he, "we worship the same God; come and I will show him to you." He then led him to an adjoining temple, and pointing to a dingy old idol, said "This is our God." My friend was so taken aback that he never used the term *Shang-ti* afterwards.

Another reason against the general use of *Shang-ti* is that whilst it is a very favourite term with the literati it is scarcely ever employed by others. During my long residence amongst the Chinese I cannot recall

*The same danger must have*  
*of Asos & Z*

then it is <sup>very unlike</sup> Jews and Baal.

to mind a single instance of its being used by any except scholars. Whether in their oaths, their prayers, or their proverbs, the term *Shang-ti* is seldom employed. *T'ien* (Heaven) *T'ien Ti* (Heaven and Earth) and *Shin-ming* (the gods) are frequently used; but as far as my experience has gone, *Shang-ti* never. Nor do we find it on hand-bills and placards inviting the people to the worship and sacrifice of the gods. Here too the term always used is *shin*,—e.g. *king shin* (敬神) *tsi shin* (祭神) “worship the *shin*,”—“sacrifice to the *shin*”—never *Shang-ti*. I have often asked my teacher and other native scholars the reason of this, but while they admitted the fact, they could give no satisfactory explanation of it. Possibly it may be that the worship of *Shang-ti* being confined to the Emperor, the people conclude that they have nothing to do with him. But be this as it may, the Chinese as a rule very rarely employ the term *Shang-ti* and know very little about it except as applied to the Taouist idol. And this to my mind is a consideration of some weight against its general use.

But were these and similar objections which might be brought against the use of *Shang-ti* fully met, and all doubt as to the propriety of its employment as a designation for the Divine Being entirely removed, the fact of its being a Relative or Relative-common term, which I suppose none will deny, would still to my mind be an insuperable difficulty in the way of using it as the representative of *Elohim* and *Theos* in the Holy Scriptures. If the conclusion at which I arrived be correct, that *Elohim* and *Theos* are *Absolute-generic* terms, then *Shang-ti* could not be employed as

quite so identified with idolatry as to be very relative



not its equivalent  
Sup. Ruler <sup>20</sup> has no such  
history as you see  
of Shang-ti.

You are bold!

their representative in a translation of the Bible into Chinese any more than its equivalent Supreme Ruler could be so employed in a translation of the Bible into English, without in many instances weakening if not completely nullifying the meaning of God's Word. Neither the Absolute and Generic senses in which *Elohim* and *Theos* are so frequently used in the Bible, nor the *contrasts* which they exhibit there between the *true God* and *false gods* and between *God* and *man* could possibly be brought out by the employment of *Shang-ti* or any other *Relative* term. And I am even bold to affirm that a translation of the Bible into Chinese with *Shang-ti* as the representative of *Elohim* and *Theos* would be incapable, according to strict logic, of proving either *the unity of God* or *the divinity of Christ*. And hence I am forced to come to the conclusion that *Shang-ti* is not the term we are in search of—is not that term in the Chinese language which most nearly represents *Elohim* and *Theos* as used in the Holy Scriptures.

T'IENT-CHOO (天主).

T'ien-choo is also a compound term consisting of two Chinese characters which mean, as all will allow, *Heavenly Lord*. Like *Shang-ti* this term *per se* is also an excellent one as a *title* for Jehovah. Moreover, as compared with *Shang-ti* it has the advantage of not being associated in the popular mind with idolatry. A few instances of its idolatrous use may indeed be found; but they are so rare and so little known as to make them of no importance. The principal objection which has been brought against the use of T'ien-choo

except Christian idolatry, the worst

arises from its employment by Roman Catholics for the Divine Being, and from its having become in consequence the designation of their form of Christianity in China. It is asserted that if Protestants were to employ this term it would expose us to the danger of being identified with Roman Catholics in the eyes of the Chinese. But surely this is a very weak and puerile objection. As well might it be said that we ought not to employ the terms *Ye-su* (Jesus) or *Ki-toh* (Christ) or any others Christian term, lest the Chinese should confound us with Roman Catholics. This, to say the least, seems a somewhat excessive exhibition of our Protestant zeal. A more reasonable and weighty objection to the use of *T'ien-choo* as the representative of *Elohim* and *Theos* independently of its *Relative* character, lies in the fact that its principal part *choo* (lord) is admissibly the only term in the Chinese language by which we can render *Adonai* in the Old Testament and *Kurios* in the New. If then all these terms *Adonai*, *Kurios*, *Elohim* and *Theos* were to be represented by *choo* (lord) or some compound of it in a translation of the Bible, such a translation would necessarily become very cumbrous and redundant.

But as in the case of *Shang-ti* so likewise in that of *T'ien-choo*, were all the objections which could be urged against its use on these and similar grounds, completely removed, the fact of its being in Chinese just such a *Relative* term as *Heavenly Lord* is in English, would to my mind make it wholly unfit to represent *Elohim* and *Theos* in the translation of God's Word. If any one will take a copy of Cruden's Con-

A / more / puerile / objection / to / call / upon / weak / and / puerile

It / thus / the / difference / i

cordance, turn to the words, *God, gods, goddess*, look out in his English Bible the various passages there referred to, and for *God, gods, goddess* substitute *Heavenly Lord*, we think it will become apparent how incongruous this or indeed any *Relative* term would be to represent *Elohim* and *Theos* in a translation of the Bible into English. The same incongruity would exist in the use of *T'ien-choo* as the representative of *Elohim* and *Theos* in a translation of God's Word into Chinese. And hence, as in the case of *Shang-ti*, I am compelled to conclude that *T'ien-choo* is not the term we are in search of—is not that term in the Chinese language which most nearly represents *Elohim* and *Theos* as used in the Holy Scriptures.

SHIN (神)

*Shin* unlike *Shang-ti* and *T'ien-choo* is a single not a compound, a generic not a relative term. This word whatever be its meaning, is applied by the Chinese in their books and in ordinary speaking, to all their *gods*, to all their objects of worship from the<sup>1</sup> highest to the lowest; as *Elohim* and *Theos* are applied in the Bible to *all* objects of worship. *Shin* is moreover the *only* word in the Chinese language which is so applied. Other words may be used to designate particular deities or classes of deities; but *Shin* is the only one which comprehends all. And like *Elohim* and *Theos* in the Bible, the Chinese employ *Shin* not only for all the invisible beings which they regard as divine, but also for all the visible images by which

<sup>1</sup> 神之尊者上帝也。 Amongst the *Shin* (gods) *Shang-ti* is the highest. 見綱目漢明帝永明八年邱濬註。

but for all which they don't regard

is relative



they are represented.<sup>1</sup> When any one visits a heathen temple in China and wishes to ask a native the name of any particular idol he may see there, he does not say "What *Shang-ti* is this?" or "what *T'ien-choo* is that?" but "what *Shin* is it?"

Again the objects worshipped by the Chinese, whether real or imaginary, bear such a striking resemblance to those worshipped by the heathen elsewhere that we cannot help regarding them as the same beings, or at least as belonging to the same class. Let us look for instance at the gods of ancient Greece.

Dr. E. Zeller, professor of the university of Heidelberg, in his *Philosophie der Griechen*, speaking of the attitude of the stoics towards the popular creed, thus writes,<sup>2</sup> "The stoics, nevertheless, were not disposed to give up the current beliefs. Far from it, they thought to discover germs of truth in these beliefs, however inadequate they were; and they accordingly made it their business to give a relative vindication to the existing creed. Holding that the word *Theos* belongs, in its primary and original sense, only to the one primary Being, they did not hesitate to apply it, in a limited and derivative sense, to all those objects by means of which the divine power is especially manifested. Nay more, in consideration of man's relationship to God, they found it not unreasonable to deduce from the primary Being gods having a resemblance to men.

<sup>1</sup> 周太后命懷義鑄銅爲九州鼎及十二神皆高一丈見綱目唐中宗嗣聖十一年註. The Empress Chow ordered Hua-yi to cast...twelve brazen gods (*Shin*) each ten feet high.

<sup>2</sup> The Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics, translated by Oswald. J. Reichel. B. C. L and M. A. See page 328.

Hence they distinguished, as Plato had done, between the eternal and immutable God, and gods created and transitory; between *God* the creator and sovereign of the world, and subordinate gods; in other words, between the universal divine power as a unity working in the world, and its individual parts and manifestations. The former they denoted by the term *Zeus*; to the latter they applied the names of the other subordinate gods."

If we substitute *Shang-ti* for *Zeus* and *Shin* for *God*, *gods* in this passage, we have an equally correct statement of the views held by some Chinese philosophers respecting the chief and subordinate deities in their creed.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Zeller goes on,—“The divinity of many beings was recognized by the stoics in this derivative sense, and, in particular, the divinity of the stars, which Plato had called created gods, which Aristotle had described as Eternal divine things, and the worship of which lay so near to the ancient cultus of nature. Not only by their lustre and effect on the senses, but far more by the regularity of their motions, do these stars prove that the material of which they consist is the purest, and that of all created objects they have the largest share in the divine reason. And so seriously was this belief held by the stoics that a philosopher of the type of Cleanthes went so far as to charge Aristarchus of Samos, the

<sup>1</sup> 聚天之神而言之則謂之上帝，見朱子全書祀祭註引程子言。If we speak of the *Shin* (god's) in their combined character they are called *Shang-ti* 千神萬神皆一神俗語。All the thousand and myriads of *Shin* (gods) are but one *Shin* (God). 天有至神爲造化之主楊子問神篇註。In heaven there is one Supreme *Shin* (God) who is the Lord of Creation.

discoverer of the earth's motion round the sun, with impiety, on the ground that he wished to remove the hearth of the universe from its proper place. This deification of the stars prepares us to find years, months, and seasons called *Theoi* as was really done by Zeno."

This statement, in the main, might also be made of the Chinese, who in a similar way and from a similar cause, deify the stars, and have gods of the year, the month, and the seasons, whom they call *shin* as the Greeks called them *Theoi*.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Zeller proceeds,—“As the stars are the first manifestation, so the elements are the first particular forms of the Divine Being, and the most common materials of the divine powers. It is, however, becoming that the all-pervading mind should not only be honoured in its primary state, but, likewise in its various derivative forms, as air, water, earth, and fire.”

This too is true of the Chinese, except that they omit *air* and add *metal* to the elements which they deify. The Chinese elements are metal, wood, water earth and fire, for all of which they have gods, whom they call *shin*, as the Greeks called *Theoi*.<sup>2</sup>

大明之神 夜明之神 五星列宿周天星辰之神 雲  
雨風雷之神 周天列職之神 天下諸神 太歲之神  
十月神 將值日功曹之神 見大明會典. The *shin*  
(god) of the Great Luminary, the *shin* (god) of the night luminary, the  
*shin* (gods) of the stars, the *shin* (gods) of the clouds, rain, wind and  
thunder, and all the other celestial *shin* (gods) who hold office; the  
terrestrial *shin* (gods) the *shin* (god) of the year, the *shin* (gods)  
of the months, and the *shin* (gods) who preside over the days.

<sup>1</sup> 孔子曰 天有五行 水火金木土分時 化育以成 萬  
物 其神謂之五帝 (註 五帝五行之神 佐天生物  
者) (見家語五帝篇). Confucius said, Heaven has five ele-  
ments water, fire, metal, wood, earth, which divide the seasons, produce,  
nourish, and complete all things; their *shin*, (gods) are called the five



Dr. Zeller continues,—“All other things too, which, by their utility to man, display in a high degree the beneficent power of God, appeared to the stoics to deserve divine honours; those honours not being paid to the things themselves, but to the powers active within them. They did not, therefore, hesitate to call gods fruits, and wine, and other gifts of the gods.”

In a similar way the Chinese do not hesitate to deify fruits, wine, grain, and many other things beneficial to man; which they call *shin* as the Greeks called them *Theoi*.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Zeller goes on, “How then could they escape the inference that, among other beneficent beings, the heroes of antiquity, in particular, deserve religious honours; since in these benefactors of mankind, of whom legends tell, the Divine spirit did not shew himself under the lower form of an  $\epsilon\xi\iota\varsigma$ , as in the elements; nor yet as a simple  $\psi\upsilon\omicron\iota\varsigma$ , as in plants; but as a rational soul? And, in truth, according to the stoic view which on this point agrees with the well-known theory of Eudemus, such deified men had, in great measure, contributed to swell the mass of the popular gods; nor had the stoics themselves any objection to their worship.”

In this particular also the Chinese are not behind their brethren of the west. They too have many deified men whom they call *shin*, as the Greeks called theirs *Theoi*.<sup>2</sup> And here I may mention, as worthy of notice

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rulers. *Comm.* These five rulers are the *shin* (gods) of the five elements who assist heaven in the production of things.

<sup>1</sup> 酒神穀神茶神花神樹神云云. The *shin* (god) of wine, the *shin* (god) of grain, the god of tea, the god of flowers, the god of trees, &c., &c.

<sup>2</sup> 關雲長 岳飛 趙元坛 土行孫 黃飛虎 云云. To



in this controversy, that the expression which the Chinese use for *deification* is *fung shin* (封神) "to make a *shin*." This, I suppose, could scarcely be translated otherwise than "to make a god."

Dr. Zeller concludes his review of the popular creed of the ancient Greeks as follows:—"Add to this the personification of *human qualities and states of mind*, and it will be seen what ample opportunity the stoics had for recognizing everywhere in nature, and in the world of man, divine agencies and powers, and consequently gods in the lower sense of the term. When once it had been allowed that the word *Theos* might be diverted from the Being to whom it properly belonged, and applied in a derivative sense to what is impersonal, and a mere manifestation of divine power, the door was opened to everything." In a note appended to this chapter Dr. Zeller tells us that Plutarch, in his sevenfold classification of the Grecian gods, assigns two classes to those *human qualities and states of mind*.

And here we also recognize a striking analogy between the popular creed of the Greeks and the popular creed of the Chinese. The Chinese also deify many human qualities and states of the soul, as well as the soul itself; all which they call *shin*, for the same reason that the Greeks called similar qualities and states of the soul, as well as the soul itself, *Theoi*.

The process by which such absurd notions find a

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this list might be added any number of other names of deified men, the heroes and worthies of antiquity; and also the name of General Ward an American citizen who has very recently received a similar honor at the hands of the Chinese for his valiant deeds against the Tai-ping rebels.

"See last page" Here ends the section of Bishop's Review

lodgement in the human mind may, according to Archbishop Whately, be somewhat as follows<sup>1</sup>:—"When several persons are said to have *one* and the *same* opinion, thought, or idea, many men overlooking the true simple statement of the case, which is, that *they are all thinking alike*, look for something more abstruse and mystical, and imagine there must be some *One Thing* in the primary sense, though not an individual, which is present at once in the mind of each of these persons. And hence, first, in poetical mythology, and ultimately perhaps in popular belief, *Fortune*, *Liberty*, *Prudence* (Minerva) a *Boundary* (Terminus) and even the *Mildew of corn* (Putigo), &c., become personified, deified, and represented by statues; somewhat according to the process which is described by Swift, in his humorous manner in speaking of zeal (in the *Tale of a Tub*) 'how from a notion it became a word, and from thence, in a hot summer, ripened into a tangible substance!' We find Seneca thinking it necessary gravely to combat the position of some of his stoical predecessors 'that the cardinal virtues are animals;' while the Hindoos of the present day, from observing the similar symptoms which are known by the name of small-pox, and the communication of the like from one patient to another, do not merely call it (as we do) *one* disease, but believe (if we may credit the accounts given) that the small-pox is a goddess, who becomes incarnate in each infected patient. All these absurdities are in fact but the extreme and ultimate point of Realism."

But whether this be or be not the true explana-

<sup>1</sup> *Elements of Logic*, App. I, page 225.

tion of this strange phenomenon of polytheism, which peoples with its myriads of phantom beings not only earth, air, and water, but even the human soul, the melancholy fact still remains that the ancient Greeks, the most highly cultivated and enlightened people of their day, in total ignorance of Jehovah, the God of the Bible, the only true and living God, deified not only every object in heaven above, visible and invisible, with all the powers and all the qualities supposed to be inherent in them, but also heaven itself; and not only every object on earth below, visible and invisible, with all the powers and all the qualities supposed to be inherent in them, but also earth itself; and not only every part of man, visible and invisible, with all the powers and all the qualities supposed to be inherent in him, but also man himself; to each and all of which in their separate and combined character, they applied the word *Theos*. And in striking analogy with this is the popular belief and practice of the Chinese. They too, in like ignorance of the God who made them, and in whom they "live, and move, and have their being," deify not only all celestial, all terrestrial, and all human things, visible and invisible, in their various derivative forms and in their different disjunctive parts, but also heaven, earth, and man; to each and all of which they apply the word *shin*.

The analogy then between the modes of thought of the ancient Greeks and of the ancient and modern Chinese, and between their respective objects of worship, is so striking as to make it impossible to resist the conviction that those objects, whether real or



imaginary, are the same, or at least belong to the same class. In the one case the Greeks called them *Theoi*, which we translate *gods*; in the other the Chinese call them *Shin*, which by parity of reasoning we should also translate *gods*. The inevitable conclusion then seems to be that *in whatever sense* the Greek *Theoi* were gods, *in the same sense* the Chinese *Shin* are gods; and that if the inspired writers used the word *Theos* for God, so we, in imitation of their example, should also use the word *Shin* for God in a translation of their writings; and hence that *Shin*, not *Shang-ti* nor *T'ien-choo*, is the term we are in search of,—is that term in the Chinese language which most nearly represents *Elohim* and *Theos* as used in the Holy Scriptures.

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## CHAPTER III.

### OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

Having arrived at the conclusion that *Shin* is the term in the Chinese language which most nearly represents *Elohim* and *Theos* as used in the Holy Scriptures, and hence that it ought to be employed as their substitute in the translation of the Bible; I will now proceed to state the objections which have been brought against its use, and endeavour to meet them as far as I can.

I. It is asserted that *Shin* in the Chinese language means *spirit, spirits* and not *god, gods*. This assertion has been made from time to time by many who have taken part in this controversy; and very recently by the Rev. J. Chalmers, of Canton, in a book entitled *The Question of Terms Simplified*. With the facts of the case as stated in the previous chapter before my mind, I have often been surprised at such an assertion being made, and I have felt that there must be a fallacy somewhere underlying the train of thought by which such a conclusion has been arrived at. But what the fallacy was I could not imagine until the appearance of Mr. Chalmers' book which revealed it to me; and for this as well as for other valuable hints which it contains, I feel much indebted to him.

In his introductory remarks Mr. Chalmers tells us how he thinks this "Question of Terms" may be simplified. "A knowledge of dead languages," he says,

“is not necessary,” nor “to read up Egyptian, Babylonian, Greek, Roman, and all other mythologies and cosmogonies.” Moreover he considers that “we may for the most part steer clear of the higher metaphysics, of ontology and the like;” and also that “questions as to the grammatical character of the word ‘God’ in our mother tongue, whether it is generic or particular, absolute or relative, may be left alone.” And then he adds, “a good knowledge of our own language, and of our English Bible, with sturdy Anglo-Saxon common sense is all that is needed on the one part; while on the other part the mind must be bent on Chinese *only*, without any foregone conclusions.”

When I had read these statements, particularly the concluding paragraph, and before I had proceeded any further, the thought occurred to me that possibly Mr. Chalmers in his treatment of this question, and especially in his treatment of the term *shin*, had fallen, however unconsciously, into the fallacy of attempting to define the meaning of Chinese words and Chinese modes of thought by the standard of English words and English modes of thought; or to put it perhaps more correctly, of attempting to interpret the meaning of heathen words and heathen modes of thought by the standard of Christian words and Christian modes of thought. The perusal of Mr. Chalmers’ book fully justified this anticipation; as his “inductive” process of reasoning from beginning to end, so far as *shin* is concerned, is conducted on this principle.

With the view of substantiating to the mind of the reader his point that *shin* means *spirit*, *spirits* and



not *God, gods*, Mr. Chalmers with most praiseworthy industry first adduces a number of passages from Chinese books in which *shin* is used in *an abstract sense* and places them beside extracts taken from Emerson's writings; and as "a knowledge of the dead languages is not necessary for the settlement of the question," he would have his readers divest themselves of all thoughts as to what *shin* might mean if it were a Greek or Latin word found in such passages in these languages, and only to reflect what it would mean if it were an English word found in similar passages in the English language. Then he draws for them the conclusion that "nothing can be more obvious than that the word *shin* in these Chinese examples corresponds to the 'soul,' 'mind,' 'spirit' and 'oversoul' in Emerson's writings; not to 'God' which he brings in occasionally by a kind of poetical license, or as a metaphor borrowed from the language of theology."

This would indeed be the natural conclusion at which to arrive were the meaning of *shin* to be determined by the standard of Emerson's language and Emerson's modes of thought; which to say the least are rather peculiar. But if Mr. Chalmers, instead of placing the passages he quotes beside extracts from Emerson's writings, would compare them with similar passages found in Greek or Latin authors, and adopt *their* standard of language and *their* modes of thought, he would quite as naturally arrive at the conclusion that *shin* corresponds to *Theos* or *deus* in their writings.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This point is illustrated in the appendix.

Again Mr. Chalmers brings forward several passages from Chinese authors in which the word *shin* is used in a *concrete sense*, and compares them with extracts taken from Milton, Shakespeare and other English writers, in which the word *spirit* is employed in a similar sense; and here also draws for his readers the conclusion that the meaning of both words is identical, and as the English word is *spirit* the Chinese word *shin* must also mean *spirit*. Mr. Chalmers for instance adduces the following parallels:—

PARALLEL 1.

“That which when it would be small becomes like a moth or a grub, when it would be large fills the world; when it would ascend mounts on the airy clouds, when it would descend enters the deep; whose transformations are not conditioned by days, nor its ascending or descending by seasons, is called *Shin*.”—*Hwan-tsze*.

“For spirits when they please  
 “Can either sex assume, or both; so soft  
 “And un compounded is their essence pure,  
 “Not ty’d or manackled with joint or limb,  
 “Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,  
 “Like cumbrous flesh; but in what shape they choose,  
 “Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure,  
 “Can execute their airy purposes,  
 “And works of love or enmity fulfil.”<sup>1</sup>—*Paradise Lost*.

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<sup>1</sup> We fear that Mr. Chalmers must have copied these lines from a volume of Poetical Extracts and could not have had time to refer to the context. Had he done so he would have seen that the *spirits* whose pure essence “is un compounded,” who assume what sex they choose, who execute “airy purposes” and fulfil “works of love or enmity” are none other than “Chemosh the obscene dread of Moab’s sons,” “Moloch Homicide,” “Baalim,” “Ashtaroth,” and the other Elohim of the nations, and that four lines below the one at which he discreetly stops these very spirits are called “bestial gods.” We give the passage in extenso.

“With these came they who from the bordering flood  
 Of old Euphrates to the brook that parts

## PARALLEL 2.

“No *Shin* is left uninvoked.”—*Book of Poetry*.

“O all ye host of heaven! O Earth! what else?  
And shall I couple hell?”—*Hamlet*.

## PARALLEL 3.

“When Hwan, prince of Tsie (B.C. 685-642), was on an expedition against the north, at Ku-chuh, he saw a man of a foot high, with clothes, cap, and ornamental cuffs, running before his horses. Kwan-chung said, ‘This is the *Shin* of the mountain. Its name is Yü-rh. When a usurping prince arises it appears.’”—*Shuh-i-ki*.

“Dr. Percy tells us that the existence of fairies is alluded to by the most ancient British bards, among whom the commonest name was that of ‘spirits of the mountain.’”—*Brand’s Popular Antiquities*.

Mr. Chalmers adds, “Instances like the above could be multiplied to any extent. There is not a fairy or ghost story in our language but might be matched with a Chinese one in which the subject is *Shin*.” And hence he would have us infer that *Shin* cannot mean *god, gods*, but must mean *spirit, spirits*.

By a similar process of reasoning Mr. Chalmers might as conclusively prove that the Greek word *Theos*, and the Latin word *deus* meant *spirit, spirits* and not

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Egypt from Syrian ground, had general names  
Of Baalim and Ashtaroth, those malo,  
These feminine. For spirits when they please  
Can either sex assume or both; so soft  
And uncompounded is their essence pure,  
Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,  
Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,  
Like cumbrous flesh; but in what shape they choose  
Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure,  
Did execute their airy purposes,  
And works of love or enmity fulfil.  
For those the race of Israel oft forsook  
Their living strength, and unfrequented left  
His righteous altar, bowing lowly down  
To bestial gods.”—*Paradise Lost*. Book i. 419—434.



*god, gods.* The fallacy of such reasoning is clearly pointed out by Archbishop Whately in the appendix to his "Elements of Logic," when treating of "certain terms which are peculiarly liable to be used ambiguously." Under the word "God" he thus writes:

"The Greek and Latin words, which we translate "God," having been applied by the heathen to their objects of worship, were naturally employed by Jews and Christians to denote the object of their own worship. But the heathen were far from regarding any of these supposed Beings as eternal, or as the Maker and Governor of the Universe. They regarded them as the same kind of beings with the *Fairies, Demons, Nixes, Bogles, genii, &c.*, which in various parts of the world are still feared, and in some places propitiated by offerings and other marks of reverence; and which in fact are the very *gods* (though no longer called by that title) which our pagan forefathers worshipped.".....  
 "The more any one studies the ancient classical writers the more in error he will be if he is not attentive to the difference between the meanings they attached to certain terms, and to those which we now attach to corresponding terms."

II. It is stated that if *Shin* be employed as the representative of *Elohim* and *Theos* in the translation of the Bible into Chinese, there is no other word which can properly take the place of *ruach* in the Old and *pneuma* in the New Testament.

This objection comes to nothing if it can be shewn, as I think it has been, that *Shin* means *god, gods*, and not *spirit, spirits*. But independently of this, is it reasonable to expect to find in Chinese a term corresponding to *ruach* and *pneuma* as employed in the Bible? Did the Greek language possess such a term before *pneuma* was, so to speak, Christianized by the translators of the Septuagint and by the writers of the New Testament, and employed in the various senses

in which we now find it? Every one acquainted with the ancient classical Greek knows that *pneuma*, before its introduction into the Bible, was never used for *spirit* at all, either in an abstract or concrete sense.<sup>1</sup> It should not then surprise us if we do not find a term in the Chinese language having the same meaning and used as *ruach* and *pneuma* are in the Bible. The fact is the ancient Greeks and Romans had no conception of a class of spiritual beings distinct from *gods* and *demons*, such as the Bible reveals to us; and therefore could not be expected to have a distinctive term for them. In this particular the notions of the Chinese are also very similar; they likewise have their *shin* (gods) and *kwei* (demons), but know nothing of any other class of spiritual existences. Still the term *ling* (靈), which a large body of Protestant missionaries employ as the representative of *ruach* and *pneuma* may in time be Christianized as *πνευμα* was, and have corresponding ideas attached to it both in the Bible and in our Christian literature.

III. *Shin* is supposed to have too wide an application and too indefinite a meaning to be employed as the representative of *Elohim* and *Theos* in the translation of the Bible.

This objection probably weighs more with some minds than any other. They reason thus, How can a term like *Shin*, which is used so widely by the Chinese

<sup>1</sup> It is difficult for one who has been long accustomed to the New Testament usage of *pneuma* to realize that before the LXX translation was made this word was used in no higher sense than that of *wind* or *breath*. But a glance at a good lexicon, if the reader has not time or opportunity to study the question for himself, will be sufficient to show that this is the case and that the statement in the text is strictly accurate. The question is however treated at greater length in the appendix.

and conveys such an indefinite meaning, and which moreover has been so degraded as to include all their objects of worship from the highest to the lowest, be employed for Jehovah the God of the Bible? To this the simple reply is, That such was also the state of the case as regards *Theos* amongst the Greeks, and *deus* amongst the Romans. These terms were equally wide in their application and equally indefinite in their meaning, and had also been degraded to quite as low if not a lower level than the Chinese word *Shin*. St. Paul tells us that both Greeks and Romans had “changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts, and creeping things,” all of which were called *Theoi* and *dei*.<sup>1</sup> Surely no term could be more degraded than these; and yet the writers of the New Testament under divine guidance were led to employ *Theos*, and its translators into Latin from natural instinct, if not from a higher cause, were led to employ *deus*.

But, it is said, *Theos* and *deus* could be used in a singular sense, and thus made to define at least a particular God; whereas, *shin* having no inflexion, the

<sup>1</sup> Quis nescit, Volusi Bithynice, qualia demens  
 Aegyptus portenta colat? crocodilon adorat  
 Pars hæc, illa pavet saturnam serpentibus Ibin.  
 Effigies sacri nitet aurea cercopitheci  
 Dimidio magicæ resonant ubi Memnone chordæ  
 Atque vetus Thebe centum jacet obruta portis.  
 Illic cœruleos, hic piscem fluminis, illic

Oppida tota canem venerantur, nemo Dianam.—*Juvenal*, Sat. xv. 1—3.

Who does not know, Volusius of Bythynia, what kinds of monsters demented Egypt worships? One part adores the crocodile, another quakes before the Ibis gorged with serpents. The golden image of a sacred long-tailed ape glitters where the magic chords resound from mutilated Memnon, and ancient Thebes lies in ruin with her hundred gates. There whole towns venerate cats, here a river fish, there a dog, but no one Diana.—*Lewis's Translation*.



hearer or reader must necessarily be left in doubt as to whether one or many gods are intended. Such, too, frequently is the state of the case as regards *Elohim*, to which in this as in other particulars *Shin* bears a very striking resemblance. When reading the Hebrew Bible one is often in doubt as to whether *Elohim* is to be understood in a singular or plural sense. For instance it is not at all clear whether Gen. iii. 5, should be translated, as in the English version "and ye shall be as gods" or "ye shall be as God." If the former be the correct rendering it seems like an indication of the existence of polytheism even before the fall, which it is difficult to imagine, except on the supposition that Satan and others amongst the fallen angels had already set themselves up as gods (*Elohim*).

Again it is said that *Elohim* though a plural noun and at times indefinite in its meaning, may yet have a singular sense attached to it by being followed by a singular verb, as in Gen. i. 1, "In the beginning *Elohim* created the heaven and the earth," where the verb *created* is singular and therefore *Elohim* though plural must be construed in a singular sense. But *Shin*, may also have a singular meaning attached to it by being preceded by a singular classifier, as for instance, *che-we shin* means *this god*.

The objection then brought against *shin* on the ground of its wideness of application and indefiniteness of meaning, might with equal force be adduced against *Elohim*, *Theos* and *deus*. And here let me bring forward the testimony of two distinguished writers as to the indefiniteness of the word *Elohim* as used by the

inspired penmen. In his introduction to the Commentary on the Bible known as *The Speaker's Commentary*, Bishop Harold Browne treating of the names of God as used in the Book of Genesis thus writes:—

*Elohim* "is the *simple generic* name of God. It occurs very seldom in the singular in the earlier books of Scripture, except in the abbreviated form of El.....In the plural it is applied to God as comprehending in Himself the fulness of all power and all the attributes which the heathen ascribe to their several divinities.....It is applied to false gods as well as to the true. The heathen nations round about the Israelites would have recognized the existence and the divinity of El and of Elohim.<sup>1</sup> Jehovah, on the contrary, is as clearly a proper name as Jupiter or Vishnu. *Elohim* and *Jehovah* are therefore as distinguishable as *deus* and *Jupiter*; the difference being only in this, that, whereas the worshippers of Jupiter admitted "gods many and lords many, a multitude of *dii*; the worshippers of Jehovah, on the other hand, believe in *no* Elohim except Jehovah."

Again Mr. William Aldis Wright, Librarian of Trinity College Cambridge, and Hebrew Examiner in the University of London, in his article in Smith's Dictionary, under the word "Jehovah" thus writes:—

"With regard to *Elohim*, the other chief name by which the Diety is designated in the Old Testament, it has been held by many, and the opinion does not even now want supporters, that in the plural form of the word was shadowed forth the plurality of persons in the godhead; and the mystery of the Trinity was inferred therefrom. Such, according to Peter Lombard, was the significance of *Elohim*. But Calvin, Mercer, Drusiers, and Belarmino have given the weight of their authority against an explanation so fanciful and so arbitrary. Among the Jewish writers of the Middle Age the question much more nearly approached its solution. R. Jehuda Halleion (12th century) the Author of the book Cozri found in the usage of *Elohim* a protest against

<sup>1</sup> This might also be said of *Shin*, the divinity of which the Japanese and other nations round about China recognize.

idolaters, who call each personified power *Eloah* and all collectively *Elohim*. He interprets it as the *most general name* of the Deity, distinguishing Him as manifested in the exhibition of His power, *without reference to his personality, or moral qualities, or to any special relation which he bears to man.*"

And here a very interesting question suggests itself, which has an intimate bearing upon this term controversy, and upon the solution of which mainly depends its settlement, namely, why did the writers of the Old and New Testament employ, in the various senses in which we find them used, these vague and indefinite words *Elohim* and *Theos* and not the distinctive *name* or *title* of any particular god? and why did the translators of their writings into Latin, German, English, &c., act in a similar manner?

Dean Stanley in his history of the Jewish church suggests a reply to this question, as regards the use of the word *Elohim*. He thus writes:—<sup>1</sup>

"If we may trust the ingenious conjecture of a distinguished writer (Max Müller), whom I have already quoted, a more certain and enduring memorial has been preserved of this side of Abraham's mission. The name by which the Deity is known throughout the patriarchal or introductory age of the Jewish church is "Elohim," translated in the English Version "*God*." In this name has been discovered a trace of the conciliatory comprehensive mission of the first prophet of the true religion. *Elohim* is a plural noun, though followed by a verb in the singular. When *Eloah* (God) was first used in the plural, it could only have signified, like any other plural, *many Eloahs*; and such a plural could only have been formed after the various names of God had become the names of independent deities; that is, during a polytheistic stage. The transition from this into the monotheistic stage could be effected only in two ways; either by denying altogether the existence of the *Elohim*, and changing

<sup>1</sup> Lecture I, p. 22. First Edition.



them into devils—as was done in Persia,—or by taking a higher view, and looking upon them as so many names invented with the honest purpose of expressing the various aspects of the Deity, though in time diverted from their original intention. This was the view taken by Abraham. Whatever the names of the *Elohim* worshipped by the different clans of his race, Abraham saw that all the *Elohim* were meant for God; and thus, *Elohim* comprehending by one name everything that ever was or ever could be called Divine, became the name by which the monotheistic age was rightly inaugurated; a plural conceived and construed as a singular. From this point of view the Semitic name of the Deity, which at first sounds not only ungrammatical but irrational, becomes perfectly clear and intelligible. It is at once the proof that monotheism rose on the ruins of a polytheistic faith, and that it absorbed and acknowledged the better tendencies of that faith. In the true spirit of the later apostle of the Gentiles, Abraham, his first predecessor and model declared the God ‘whom they ignorantly worshipped’ to be the ‘God that made the world and all things therein’ the ‘Lord of heaven and earth,’ ‘in whom we live, and move, and have our being.’”

Another able writer in an essay on this Term Controversy, treats the same question in a somewhat similar way with regard to *Theos, deus, &c.* He thus writes<sup>1</sup> :—

“The ancient Chinese, whilst worshipping many gods, did yet acknowledge one Supreme Lord. In this they have acted like every other idolatrous nation. While worshipping a host of idols ‘under every green tree and on every high hill’ they had yet sufficient of the light of nature, or the glimmerings of Revelation and tradition, to teach them that there must be one Being above all others. The Greeks had their Zeus, the Romans their Jupiter, the Phenicians their Baal, the Britons their Woden, and the Chinese their *Shang-ti* or *Tien*.”

Then winding up his argument as to which should be employed to represent *Elohim* and *Theos* in the

<sup>1</sup> *Chinese Repository*, vol. xv., p. 589.

translation of the Bible, the specific name *Shang-ti*, or the generic word *Shin*, he says :—

“All scriptural authority, all apostolic example, and all Christian custom, is in favour of using the generic term for *divinity* in each nation as the designation of the true God. In Greek, although there was the term *Zeus* appropriated to their Supreme God, of whom glorious things were spoken, yet the overwhelming authority of Christ and his Apostles, (to say nothing of all the Greek fathers) decides that the word *Theos* and *Kurios* shall be used, and this, well knowing that the pagan Greeks worshipped ‘Gods many and Lords many.’ In Latin, although there was a Jupiter equally supreme among the gods, yet the uniform custom, sanctioned doubtless by the Apostle Paul, who dwelt so long at Rome, has been to use *Deus* and *Dominus*, though the *Dii* and *Domini* of Rome were as numerous and false as the *Kwei-shin* of China. In the nations of northern Europe, though there was the powerful Woden and Thor, yet the generic and simple terms *God* and *Lord* have been the chosen terms in which British and American Christians worship their creator. And in Germany *Gott* and *Herr* have received only an additional sanction in the venerable version of Luther. Why, then, should the descendants of those who reject the terms Woden and Thor and Jupiter, &c., adopt the name of the national god of China to designate Jehovah? Shang-ti admits a multitude of inferior gods without jealousy, but Jehovah says, ‘I am God and there is none else,’ for divinity is centred in Himself alone.’

These extracts afford a partial, if not a complete answer to the question, why the inspired writers and the translators of their writings into Latin, German, English, &c., used the generic word *God* and not the distinctive *name* or *title* of any particular god in the various senses in which *Elohim* and *Theos* are employed in the Bible. The following remarks may also throw some light upon this question.

The sacred writers in their treatment of polytheism seem to have regarded *all objects of worship*

however low and degraded, even the images of “birds, and fourfooted beasts and creeping things” as *gods* in some sense; and hence as occupying a position of antagonism to, and of rivalry with Jehovah, the only living and true God. This seems clear not only from the general bearing of all scriptural teaching respecting this matter, but also from such passages as the following, where the expression *an object of worship* appears to be used as equivalent to the word *god*. In Acts xvii. 23, it is written, “As I passed by and beheld your *σεβάσματα*,” (objects of worship), or as the marginal reading in our English version has it “the gods that ye worship.” Again in 2. Thess. ii. 4, it is written, “who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called *God*, or that is a *σέβασμα*” (an object of worship). Here *θεος* (God) and *σέβασμα* (an object of worship) are evidently used as convertible terms.

In Bible language then, and according to Bible modes of thought, *all objects of worship* throughout the whole world are *Gods* in some sense—in some sense all occupy a position and have attributes assigned to them which properly belong to Jehovah alone. Now the *fiat* has gone forth that the “*gods* that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.” But how is this to be effected? Surely not by the exercise of physical power on the part of the Almighty, nor constrainedly on the part of their deluded votaries; but by the light of God’s Word, and the teaching of His Holy Spirit, shewing them the absurdity of worshipping such “vanities,” and thus leading them of



their own free will to “cast their idols of silver and their idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats.” But how is this teaching to be imparted? How are idolaters to be taught that the things which they regard as *gods* are *no gods*? The only way as it appears to me in which this can be done is by taking the term which they apply to *all their objects of worship* and claiming it for Jehovah alone—by telling, for instance, the Jews that beside Jehovah there is no *Elohim*, the Greeks that beside Jehovah there is no *Theos*, the Romans that beside Jehovah there is no *deus*, and the Chinese that beside Jehovah there is no *Shin*. Every attempt to teach mankind the folly and sin of polytheism and the existence of only one living and true God by means of any other term than the *absolute-generic* term which in each language is applied to “all their objects of worship,” must in my judgment necessarily fail.

IV. It is said that *Shin* when used in speaking may be confounded with other words of the same sound in the minds of the hearers.

This objection though seldom brought forward is worthy of some consideration. The Chinese written language to a considerable extent is monosyllabic, and the number of its different sounds very limited. Consequently it frequently happens that several monosyllabic words though written in a different manner, have the same sound. These words therefore while distinguishable by the eye when seen, are not so by the ear when heard. To meet this difficulty the natives

in their colloquials change the monosyllabic word into a dissyllabic or polysyllabic form by adding to it either a prefix or a suffix as the case may be. For instance the word for *table* in the written language according to the Ningpo pronunciation is *choh*, and there are several other words of the same sound which when articulated could not be distinguished one from another. To remove the ambiguity which might in consequence arise a Ningpo man in speaking always employs for *choh* (table) the dissyllabic form *choh-teng*. This method they also adopt in the case of *Shin*. Whenever the monosyllabic word *shin* is likely to be unintelligible to the ear when spoken, they use the dissyllabic form *Shin-ming*. We too in speaking and also in writing the colloquials of China, which when read aloud are supposed to be intelligible to the hearer, ought I think to follow this native example. By using the dissyllabic word *Shin-ming* in speaking, and also in our colloquial literature, instead of the monosyllabic *Shin*, all danger of its being confounded with other words of the same sound will be completely obviated.

#### CONCLUSION.

I have now expressed, however feebly and imperfectly, my views upon this Term Question. They are in the main, as will be seen, the views which have already been put forward, and in a much abler manner, by Bishop Boone and others who have supported the *Shin* side of this question. I cannot therefore pretend to claim for them any originality. And yet possibly certain aspects of the subject may be presented in this

paper in a somewhat new light and come home with fresh force to some minds. My object in writing it will be fully gained if, under God, it tends in any way and to any extent, to harmonize the views of Protestant Missionaries in China on this most important subject, and to put an end to our present unhappy divisions, so that "we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of Truth and Peace, of Faith and Charity; and may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace."

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# A P P E N D I X

ON

## THE WORD FOR "SPIRIT" IN GREEK.



The object of the writer in the preceding paper has been solely to diseuss the merits of the various terms which have been put forward as the equivalentes for the *word* God. In this question the term for *Spirit* has properly no plaee. But as it has been stated that if *Shin* be used for *God* there is no other word in the Chinese language which can well be used for the translation of *Spirit*, it will be well to add a few words, with regard to this subject. Moreover the paper which has reeently been published by Mr. Chalmers of Canton has treated the Term Controversy as if all turned on the meaning of this word. Let us therefore briefly consider how far such a method is applicable to the question before us.

In the first plaee let it be borne in mind that Christian ideas are very different from those of heathenism. Our conceptions of the Divine Being are far separated from those of the heathen whom we have come to teach, and we differ no less in our conceptions of *Spirit* and *Spirits*. This has been entirely overlooked by Mr. Chalmers. He commences his paper with an elaborate diseussion of the meanings of Spirit, which he arranges in four divisions. Without entering into an examination of the merits of his analysis from a Christian point of view, it is pertinent to inquire how far we may expect to find the ideas which he there expresses, in the language of a heathen people. Let us take as an example a nation whose philosophers discussed this and kindred questions in no superficial manner, and left to us a rich inheritance of their writings from which we may ascertain both

their modes of thought and the various uses of the words in which they clothed them. And when it is further borne in mind that the most famous translation of the Old Testament Scriptures, from which the apostles quoted, was in the Greek language, and that the New Testament was given to the world in that language, it will be admitted that we have a weighty example before us. If therefore it can be shewn that the Greeks had no word which could satisfy the requirements of Mr. Chalmers, much of his argument will fall to the ground.

The LXX translators and the writers of the New Testament used the word *πνεῦμα* to express what we call *Spirit*. In the selection of this word they had nothing to guide them, humanly speaking, but its ordinary usage in the classical writings of Greece. If tried by the standard laid down by Mr. Chalmers were they right or wrong? Let us see how far *πνεῦμα* as used by classical writers may be applied to the translation of the meanings of *spirit*, which are enunciated on the ninth page of "The Question of Terms Simplified." There we read:—

I. "A Spirit is something belonging to and forming an integral part of a living being; as 'the Spirit of God,' 'the spirit of man'; in which sense it is more or less personal."

*Πνεῦμα ἀνθρώπου* could mean nothing but "breath." Thus we read "*σάλπιγξ βροτέιου πνεύματος πληρουμένη*" *Esch. Eum.* 568. A trumpet filled with mortal breath.

The word is applied to a divine inbreathing in Plato. *Ax.* 371. "*εἰ μή τι θεῖον ὄντως ἐνῆν πνεῦμα ἐν ψυχῇ δι' ὃν τῆν τῶν τηλικῶν δε περίνοιαν καὶ γνῶσιν ἔσχεν.*" "Unless indeed there were some breath of divinity in the soul by which it could perceive and know such great matters." The word is however here by no means used in a personal sense.

II. "Spirit is simply a quality; as 'a man of spirit'; in which sense it is not personal."

*Πνευμα* could certainly not be used in this sense.

III. "A spirit is a spiritual being; as 'God is a Spirit' (which expression becomes altered in all our minds to 'God is pure spirit'), 'they supposed that they had seen a spirit,' 'Sir Spirit, I doubt I do nick-name you, for those of your kind (they say) have no sense,' (sensation. Queen Elizabeth to Lord Burleigh). 'Several energetic spirits resident at Amoy' (*China Mail*). This usage is, strictly speaking, what is called metonymy. The



whole Being, the entire person, is included in the word which primarily denotes only a part."

*Πνευμα* never bore this meaning in any classical writings, and not one of the examples given could be translated by the use of the word. *πνεῦμα ὁ Θεός* is indeed found in philosophical works, but as is pointed out later on, this expression would form one of the great objections to the use of the word in St. John.

IV. "Spirit is spoken of as a distinct essence; as 'The Egyptians are men and not God; their horses are flesh and not spirit.' This usage directly suggests the inquiry 'what is spirit?'"

From a Classical point of view this question would be as promptly answered by the remark that *πνεῦμα* is *wind*.

In short *πνεῦμα* never bore any of the meanings attributed to *Spirit* by Mr. Chalmers, before the LXX translation was made. It is not used by classical writers in any other sense than that of *wind* or *breath* either simple or metaphorical. Doubtless the reason which led the LXX translators to select *πνεῦμα* was the fact that it was the exact equivalent of *Ruach* in these lower meanings. But it was a distinct straining of language to apply *πνεῦμα* to any abstract or personal sense of *Ruach*. In fact if it had been thought essential to find a word which should adequately represent Spirit as explained by Mr. Chalmers, the Old Testament could not have been translated, and the New Testament could never have been written.

Further, there was, as has been noticed above, a very serious objection to the use of the word for theological purposes. The most important school of philosophers then existing, viz., the Stoics, had already appropriated the term *πνεῦμα* to express their conception of the Divine essence which, it need hardly be said, was very wide of the truth. They spoke of God as being Fire, Ether, Air, or most generally as being *πνεῦμα* or atmospheric current. Cf. Hob. Ecl. i. 58. "Ποσειδώνιος (θεὸν λέγει) πνεῦμα νοερὸν καὶ πυρῶδες" "Poseidonius calls God an intellectual and fiery atmospheric current." And that this objection was not without weight may be proved by the fact that Origen and others found it necessary in defence of Christianity to attack the materialistic views "of the stoics, who said that God is a *πνευμα* permeating all things and holding all things in himself"; "τῶν

Στωϊκῶν φάσκοντων ὅτι ὁ θεὸς πνεῦμα ἔστιν διὰ πάντων διε-  
λληλοθὸς καὶ πάντ' ἐν ἑαυτῷ περιεχόν."—*Origen c Cels* vi. 71.

When judged therefore by the light of certain modern contro-  
versialists the LXX translators fell into the grievous error of  
using a word which not only did not mean "Spirit," but which  
was also objectionable on other grounds. The only difficulty  
which is involved in this conclusion is, that the usage of the  
LXX was sanctioned by the inspired writers of the New Testament.  
How are we to account for the fact that they also employed a word  
so ill suited for their purpose as πνεῦμα. It will probably be  
said that they were forced to adopt it because there was no other  
word in the Greek language at all suited to express the idea of  
Spirit. That this is strictly true we have no doubt; but if we  
employ the method of Mr. Chalmers the statement loses its force.  
It has been noticed in the preceding paper that by that method  
it may be shewn that θεός is the greek equivalent for Spirit.  
We have already seen that πνεῦμα when measured by the standard  
of modern philosophy falls very far short of our requirements;  
let us now apply this standard to θεός in the style of "The ques-  
tion of Terms simplified" and consider whether the Apostles  
ought not to have used that word to express Spirit.

In the work referred to we have a number of parallels put  
before us intended to show that *shin* which is there translated  
*spirit, mind* etc, is the equivalent of these terms in modern writ-  
ings. It is proposed to compare similar passages from Greek  
authors where θεός is used in the same manner. Mr. Chalmers  
arranges his parallels under two heads, viz. "Pantheism," and  
"Spiritual and intelligent things." Quotations from Pantheistic  
sources can scarcely be considered of much weight in a discus-  
sion like the present. We will therefore first take those parallels  
which may be said to be drawn from popular rather than philo-  
sophic sources, and which are to be found in the sixth chapter of  
the above mentioned work.

*Parallel. I.* It has already been noticed (p. 34 note) that it is  
unfortunate that Mr. Chalmers should not have begun his quota-  
tion somewhat earlier, and thus have made it clear to all his  
readers that Milton is speaking of those *gods* of the heathen, wh<sup>o</sup>

"had general names

Of Baalim and Ashtaroth, those male,  
 These feminine, for spirits when they please  
 Can either sex assume, &c.

That these "spirits" are the *θεοί* of the heathen there can be no doubt, and Milton evidently had before his mind the various forms assumed by the spirits (*θεοί*) of Greece in legendary poetry for "works of love or enmity" as Zeus becomes a swan, Jupiter a shower of gold.

*Parallel II.* "No shin is left uninvoked:"—*Book of Poetry.*

"The Spirit of drouht is described as a man three feet high, naked, and having his eyes in the crown of his head. All sorts were propitiated in time of distress."

"O all ye host of heaven! O earth! What else? And shall I couple hell?"—*Hamlet.*

"O divine Æther, and swift winged breezes, fountains of rivers, and thou Oh deep langhing along unnumbered ripples, and Earth the mother of all! Yea, thee too do I invoke all-seeing circle of the Sun."

ὦ δῖος αἰθῆρ καὶ ταχύπτεραι πνοαί,  
 ποταμῶν τε πηγὰι, ποντίων τε κυμάτων  
 ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα, παμμῆτορ τε γῆ,  
 καὶ τὸν πανόπτῃν κύκλον ἡλίου καλῶ.

*Æsch. Prom. Vinct., 88-91.*

"O darkness, my light! O hell, most brilliant as thou seemest to me! Pity, pity me thy suppliant."

ὠ σκότος, ἐμὸν φάος,  
 "ερεβος ὦ φαεννότατον ὡς ἐμοὶ  
 "ελεσθ' "ελεσθέ μ' οἰκήτορα.

*Soph Ajax, 394.*

Heaven, earth, etc. were all called spirits (*θεοί*) by the Greeks, as also was Hell. Cf *Hesiod Theog.* 125.

In *Parallel III.* we have an account of a mountain *shin*, and the following quotation from Brands' popular antiquities:—

"Dr. Percy tells us that the existence of fairies is alluded to by the most ancient British bards, among whom the commonest name was that of 'spirits of the mountains.'"

Amongst the ancient Greek bards they were also commonly called mountain spirits (*θεοί*); special names such as Pan, or



Nymphs, being also given to them. Thus we find in the Homeric hymns:—

“Pan do I proclaim the pastoral spirit (Θεόν) with glistening shaggy locks, whose portion is each snow-capped peak, the mountain tops and rocky tracks.”

Παν' ἀνακεκλόμεναι, νόμιον θεόν, ἀγλαέθειρον,  
αὐχμήνθ', ὅς πάντα λόφον νιφόεντα λέλογχεν  
καὶ κοροφᾶς ὀρέων καὶ πετρήεντα κέλευθα.

Ἐις Πᾶνα 5-8.

“And she (Earth) brought forth the lofty mountains, the pleasant abodes of the spirit (θεῶν) Nymphs, who dwell upon the thickly wooded mountains.”

γείνατο δ' οὔρεα μακρὰ, θεῶν χαρίεντας ἐναύλους  
Νυμφέων, αἶ νάιουσιν ἀν' οὔρεα βησσηέντα.

Hes. Theog.: 129.

In *Parallel IV.* we have an account of a guardian *Shin* which was a tortoise, compared with the story of “a spirit called the hairy one” who turned hay-maker in the Isle of Man.

We have already quoted a passage from the Homeric hymn to Pan which describes a hairy *spirit*. Stories of the spirits partaking in rustic occupations are very plentiful in Greek literature. Thus we find Poseidon and Apollo (μοῦνοι νῶϊ θεῶν. *Hom. Il.* 21. 443, we alone of the *spirits*) conversing, and Poseidon says:—

Thy task it was to feed the bellowing droves  
Along fair Ida's vales and pendent groves.”

Pope's *Iliad*, 521, 522.

σὺ δ' εἰλίποδας ἑλικες βοῦς βουκολέεσκες  
Ἰδῆς ἐν κνημοισι πολυπτύχου ὑληέσσης.

Homer's *Iliad*, 448-9.

Instances like the above could be multiplied to any extent. There is not a fairy or ghost story in our language, but might be matched with a Greek one in which the subject is (θεός).

Let us now pass on to the philosophical parallels. Pantheistic doctrines are not the sources from which we should naturally look for light in a controversy on the proper term for GOD. But we must say that Mr. Chalmers has gone to the right place when he seeks for parallels from a modern philosopher whose views were reprobated even by his Unitarian congregation at Boston, and who only brings “GOD” into his writings “occasion-

ally by a kind of poetical license, or as a metaphor borrowed from the language of theology." We read that the word *shin* in the Chinese pantheistic writings "corresponds to the 'soul,' 'mind,' 'spirit' and oversoul in Emerson's writings," and it has even been suggested that "the soul of Lao-tsu may have transmigrated into Emerson." To us it seems more probable that he had studied the works of certain followers of Zeno who held "that τὸν θεόν permeated the whole universe and was in some parts *mind*, in others *soul*, in others *nature*, in others *condition*." "δια πάσης οὐσίας πεφοιτηκέσαι τὸν θεὸν καὶ ποῦ μὲν εἶναι νοῦν ποῦ δὲ ψυχὴν, ποῦ δὲ φύσιν, ποῦ δὲ ἐξίπν"—*Themist de an* 72 b.

It is much to be regretted that Ningpo does not furnish a complete collection of the works of the pantheists of Greece. We cannot therefore undertake to give more than a general sketch of the line which might be taken if we wished to show that the method on which we are working would prove εἰς to be the Greek equivalent of *spirit, soul*, etc.

The first Parallel adduced by Mr. Chalmers with regard to the universal mind might be completed with some such passages as these:—

Sen. Nat. Qu. Prolog. 13. "Quid est Deus? Mens universa."

"What is Deus? The mind of the universe."

Sen. Ep. 41, 2. "In unoquoque virorum bonorum, quis deus incertum est, habitat deus."

"In each good man dwells *deus*, what *deus* we know not."

Parallel II. "Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of our own minds."

"The mind is the lord of the body and *shin* is the mind's precious thing."

Sen. Ep. 31. 11. "Quid aliud voces hunc (animum rectum) quam deum in corpore humano hospitantem?"

"What can you call this (the right mind of the Stoics) but *deum* dwelling in the human body?"

Parallels III and IV which refer to "genius" might be coupled with such expressions as

"Each of us have *deum* given to us as a guardian"

"Unicuique nostrum pædagogum dari deum"— *Sen. Ep.* 110. 1.

"ὁ θεὸς ἐνδόν ἐστὶ καὶ ὁ ὑμέτερος δαίμων ἐστὶ."

"ὁ θεὸς is within and is your genius."

These two passages are quoted by Zeller with reference to the doctrine of "guardian spirits."

*Parallel V.* "All the devils respect virtue."

This may or may not be true, but we presume that none of our readers would wish to give the devils a monopoly in this matter.

*Parallel VI.* The ordinary Pantheistic notion of the diffusion of universal mind through everything was held by the Stoics.

"Mind is in the very meanest, being *θειον*.

"τὸν νοῦν καὶ ἐν τοῖς φανλοτάτοις εἶναι θεῖον ὄντα"

*Alex. Aphr. De An.* 145.

Cf. Lucian. *Hermot* 811. ἀκούομεν δὲ αὐτοῦ λέγοντος ὡς καὶ ὁ θεὸς οὐκ ἐν οὐρανῷ ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ διὰ πάντων πεφοιτηκεν οἶον ξύλων καὶ λίθων καὶ ζῳῶν, ἄχρη καὶ τῶν ἀτιμωτάτων.

"We heard him say that ὁ θεός is not in heaven but permeates all things such as pieces of wood and stone, living beings, and even the lowest things."

Emerson's triads in *Parallel 8.* read not unlike the words of Poseidonius "πρῶτον μὲν εἶναι τὸν Δία, δεύτερον δὲ τὴν φύσιν, τρίτην δὲ τὴν εἰμαρμένην.

"First, Jove; second, nature; third, fate."

Compare "Quid enim aliud est natura, quam deus?"

"For what is nature but *deus*?—*Seneca Benef.* 4, 7, 1.

*Parallel IX.* "There is therefore an aboriginal union of reason between God and man."

"Est igitur.....prima homini cum deo rationis societas"—*Cic Legg.* 7, 23.

It would appear that if we had the writings of these philosophers before us, we might issue a complete edition of "The Question of Terms Simplified" to prove that the LXX translators, the Evangelists and Apostles were all in error when they wrote *θεός* and *πνεῦμα* to represent *Elohim* and *Ruach*. We have no wish to do so, for we are imbued with the belief that the writers of our New Testament were inspired. We must look therefore to our own argument for the mistake, and it is easy of detection for it lies upon the surface. We have followed the example of another writer in measuring the usages of a heathen language by the standard which we find in the writings of Christendom. By this method we have found that *πνεῦμα* does not mean *Spirit*, but that *θεός* ought rather to take its place.

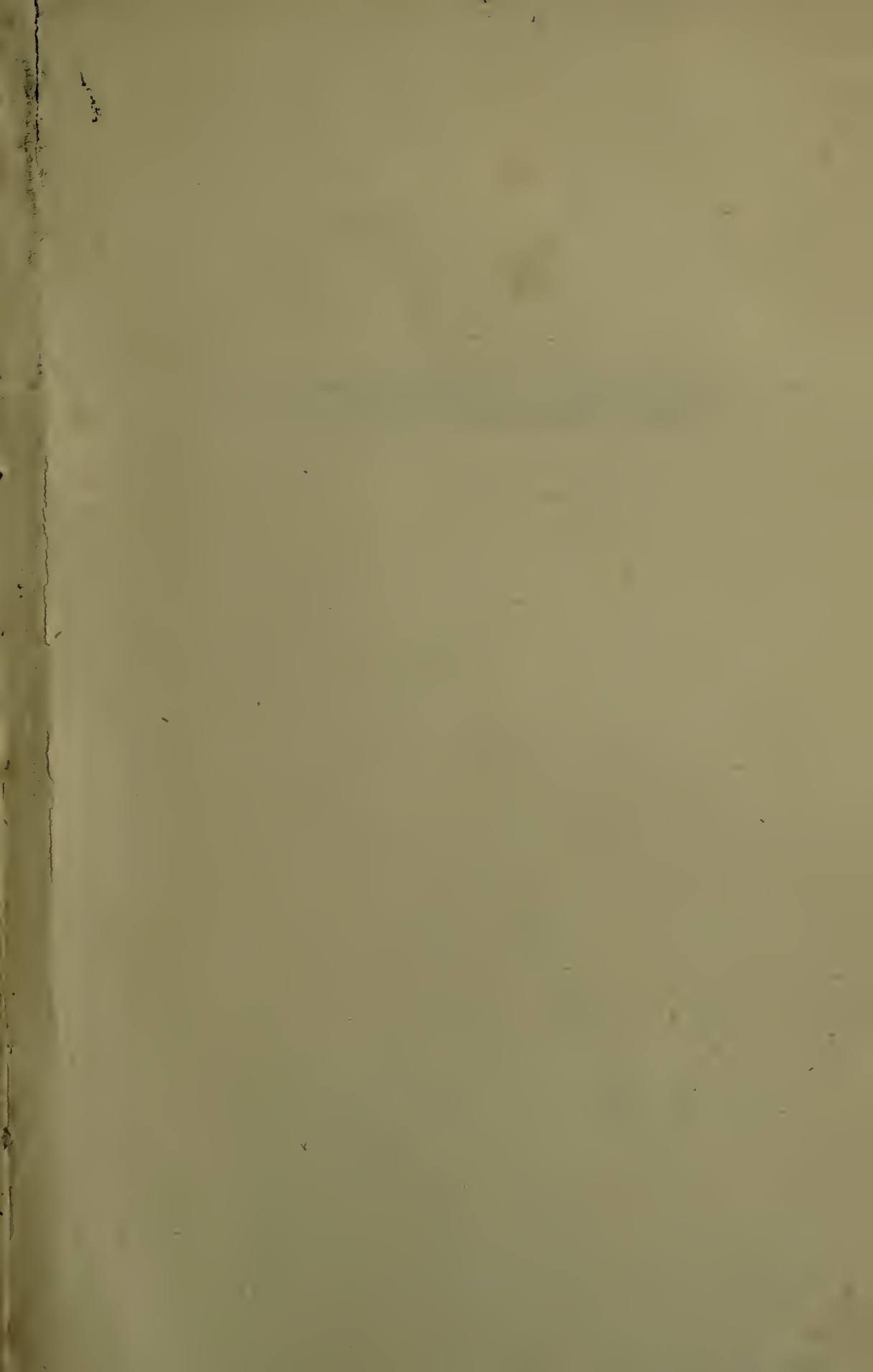


Ought it to be a subject for wonder that we hesitate to accept a theory which is based entirely upon arguments such as these? The Greeks knew not of Spirit as we know it; and their notions of Divinity were degraded to the lowest depths.<sup>1</sup> May we not expect to find the same state of things existing in China?

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<sup>1</sup> As a curious instance of the vagueness of the Greeks on these subjects we notice that even Aristotle when discussing the doctrine of Thales "that all things were filled with θεῶν" (πάνταπλήρη θεῶν εἶναι), though he does not affirm that the doctrine professed was "that the soul is mixed with all things," conjectures that such a conception was the ground of his belief in the universal presence of the gods.—*Arist De Animâ* 2.L.









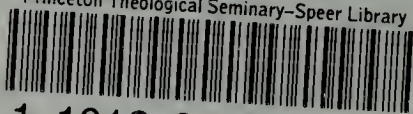
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